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## Senate

**By Mr. BROWNBACK (for himself, Mr. CLELAND, Mr. SANTORUM, Mr. LOTT, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. REID, Mr. DODD, Mr. MILLER, and Mr. EDWARDS):**

S. 829. A bill to establish the National Museum of African American History and Culture within the Smithsonian Institution; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I am honored to introduce legislation, today, that creates the "National Museum of African American History and Culture." I along with Senators MAX CLELAND, RICH SANTORUM, Majority Leader LOTT, HILLARY CLINTON, HARRY REID, CHRISTOPHER DODD, ZELL MILLER, and JOHN EDWARDS are committed to passing this legislation this year.

One of the most important chapters in our national story of human freedom and dignity is the history and legacy of the African American march toward freedom, legal equality and full participation in American Society. Yet in our nation's front yard, the National Mall, there is no museum set aside to honor this legacy.

As a Kansan, I feel a special connection to honoring the legacy of African Americans. Kansas, as you know, not only played a significant role in the Civil War but also was chosen by many African-American families as a place to began their new life of freedom and prosperity in the "Exodus to Kansas."

This is just one part of the incredible history of African Americans that must be told on a national level. We have over 200 wonderful African-American history museums across the nation that tell portions of the African American story. However, this legacy must be showcased at a national level.

That is why I am here today with my colleagues introducing this legislation to create the National Museum of African American history and culture within the Smithsonian Institution, a premier organization, which represents the best museums in the nation. We believe it is vitally important that the Smithsonian, the world's leading museum organization, provide its expertise in putting this facility and its programs together.

This project has brought together a very broad and bicameral coalition that stood with us today during the press conference to announce the introduction of this bill. I would like to personally thank Pastor Chuck Singleton, of Loveland Church in California, as well as Robert Johnson, of B.E.T., Dorothy Height of the National Council of Negro Women, and Phyllis Berry Myers, of the Center for New Black Leadership for joining with us to support this legislation today.

We do not pretend that our legislation is a cure-all for the problem of racial division. It is, however, an important and productive step toward healing our nation's racial wounds. I believe that this museum will both celebrate African American achievement and serve as a landmark of national conscience on the historical facts of slavery and the civil rights struggle.

We have an extraordinary opportunity before us--a chance to learn, understand and remember together our nation's history and to honor the significant contribution of African Americans to our history and culture.